



OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Three Arrested for Woods Arson in George County

Hattiesburg, MS—On March 17, 2009, three men from George County were arrested and each charged with multiple counts of felony woods arson. George William Boyle III, age 28, was charged with 8 counts of felony woods arson. Benjamin T. Brown, age 34, was charged with 14 counts of felony woods arson. Christopher Blake Brown, age 19, was charged with 6 counts of felony woods arson. These individuals were operating together, setting a series of mostly night fires near Lucedale, Mississippi. Altogether, 14 separate fires were set on different dates during February.

Mississippi Forestry Commission investigators Scott Miles and Brandon Hendry began their investigation in mid-February. "Information provided by a number of sources led to the arrest of these individuals," said Miles, chief investigator with the commission. "This is a good example of different departments and agencies coming together with information to help protect and serve the public."

Others assisting with the investigation include: Mitchell Mixon, State Fire Marshall's Office; Mark McLeod, Rocky Creek Volunteer Fire Department; Anthony Williams, Shipman Volunteer Fire Department; Regina McClendon, Lucedale Police Department; and Eric Purvis, George County Sheriff's Department.

In Mississippi, the penalty for felony woods arson is, upon conviction, sentenced to the state penitentiary for not more than two years nor less than one year, or be fined not less than \$200 nor more than \$1,000, or both at the discretion of the court.

Please report any suspicious behavior in regard to a woods fire by calling the Mississippi Forestry Commission's Woods Arson Hotline at 1-800-240-5161. Information leading to the arrest and conviction of a woods arsonist can be rewarded up to \$2,500.

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The Mississippi Forestry Commission asks that you ***THINK TWICE Before You Do Any Outdoor burning! Don't Burn on Windy Days because Carelessness Causes Wildfires. Check for local burn bans at www.mfc.state.ms.us***